VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

A BOOKFUL OF BEASTS

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Illustrated by N. Charushin

Translated from the Russian by Avril Pyman

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Elephant, lion, kangaroo!
There's one on every page for you.

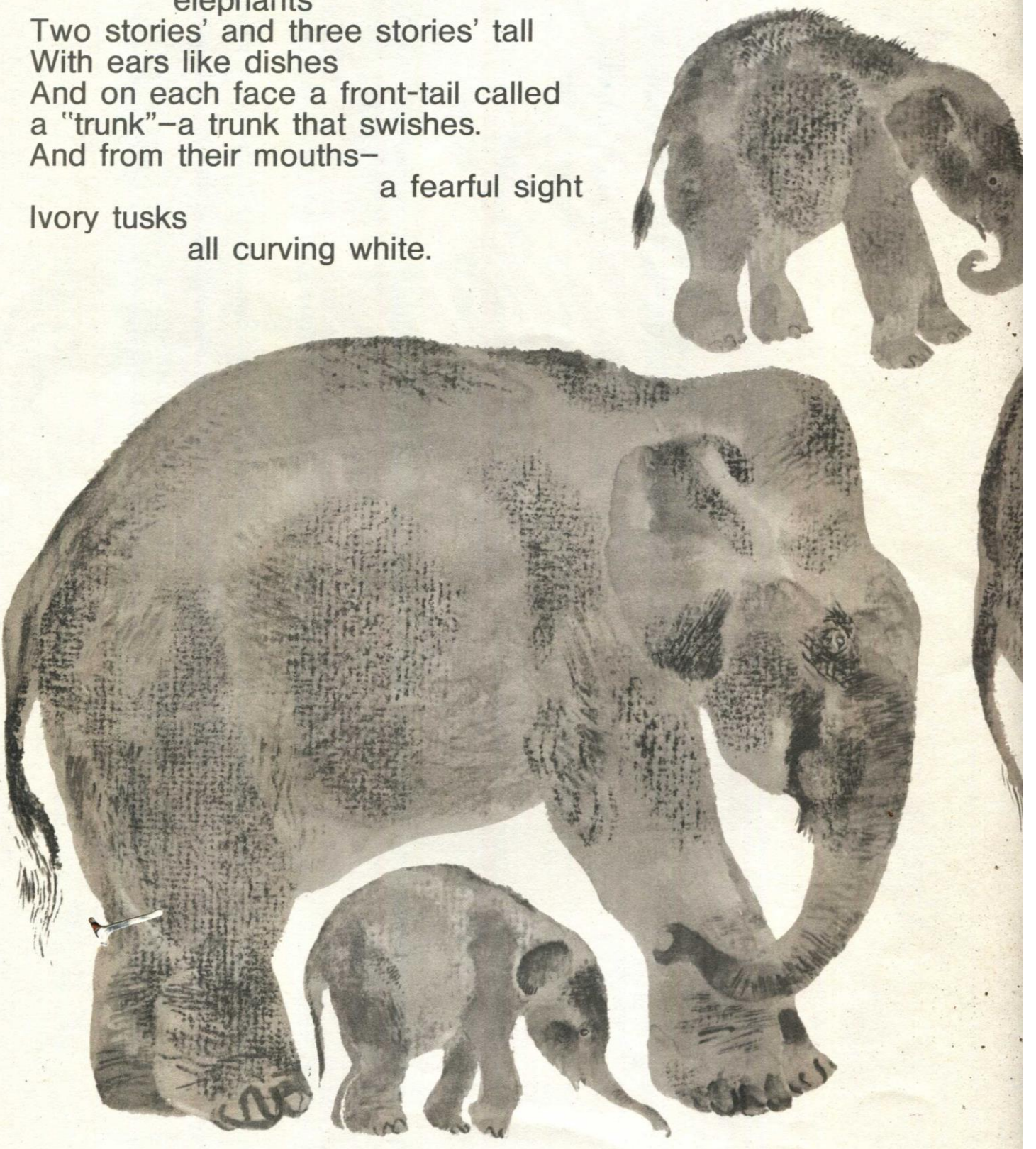
The lion is neither last nor least,
Come, take a good, hard look.
He is no longer
King of Beasts,
Just Chairman–in this book.

This animal is called the Lama
Lama-daughter,
Lama-Mama.

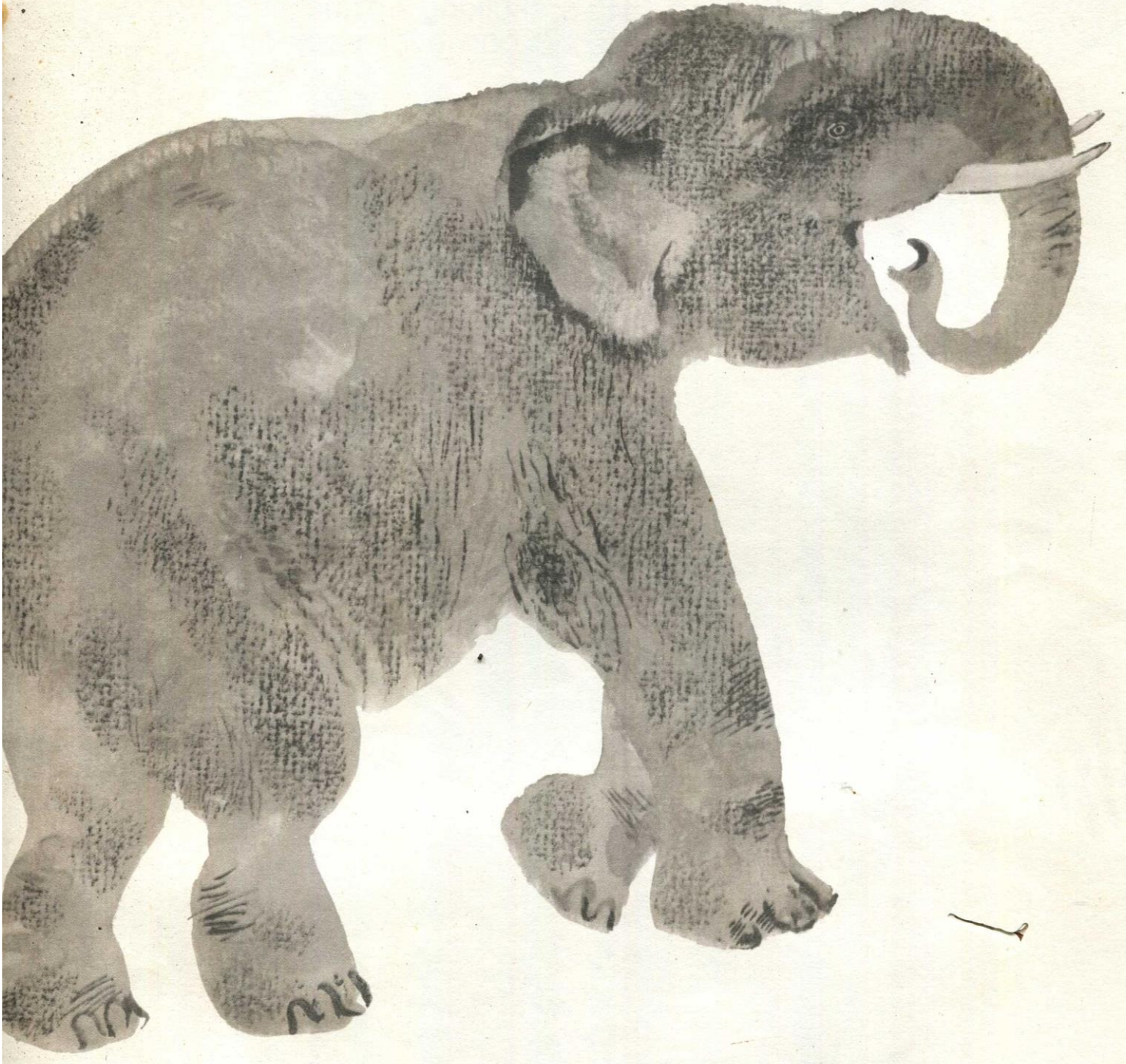
Two pelicans in mid-Atlantic
One very small–and one gigantic.

Here's the Zebra–at her nattiest!
Stripier than a garden-mattress.

Now straight into our book there pants
a family
of
elephants
Two stories' and three stories' tall
With ears like dishes
And on each face a front-tail called
a "trunk"–a trunk that swishes.
And from their mouths–
a fearful sight
Ivory tusks
all curving white.



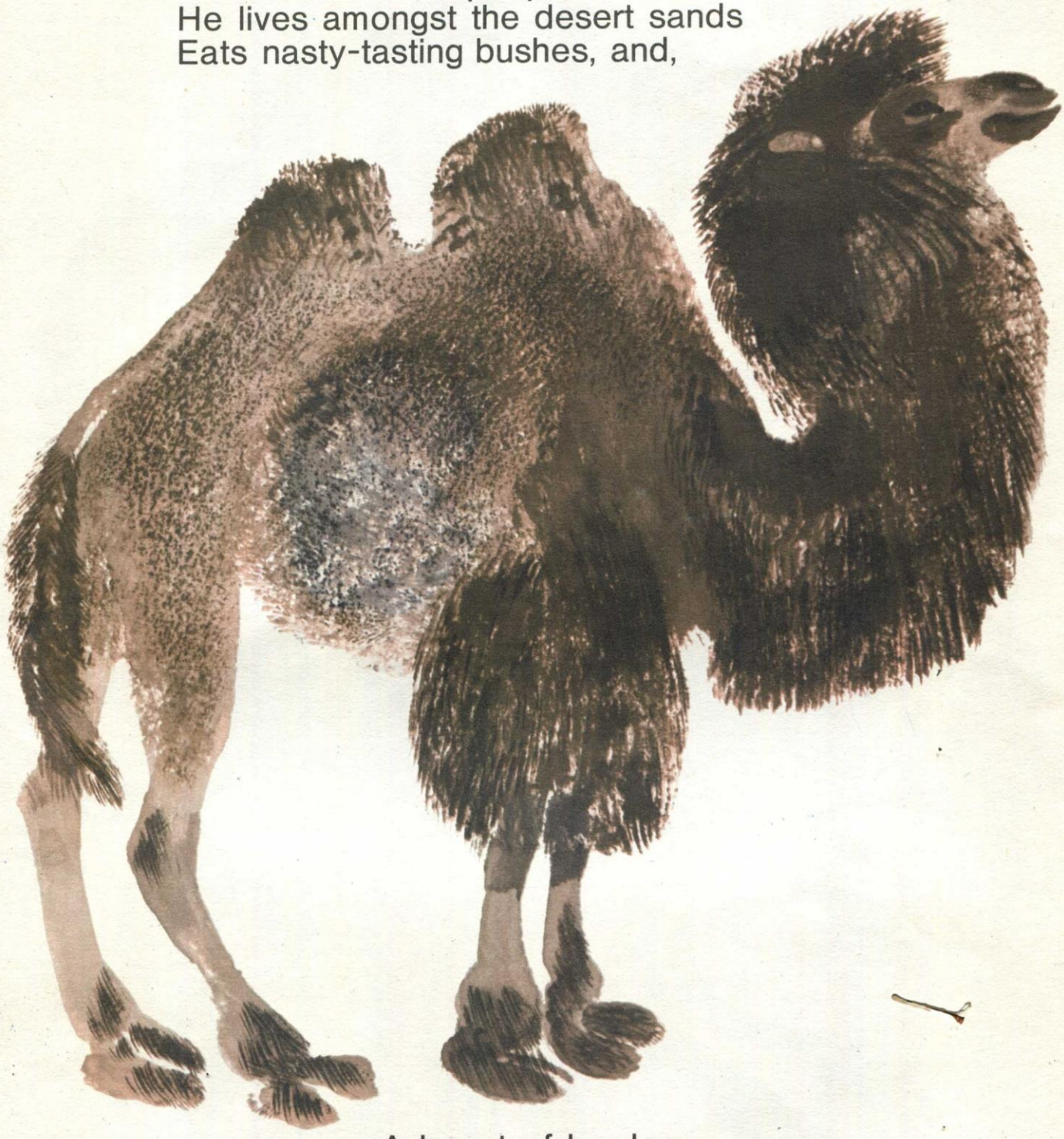
How many new clothes they must need,
What lots to eat and drink!
Their baby grows at such a speed
He'll soon outgrow our Dad, I think.



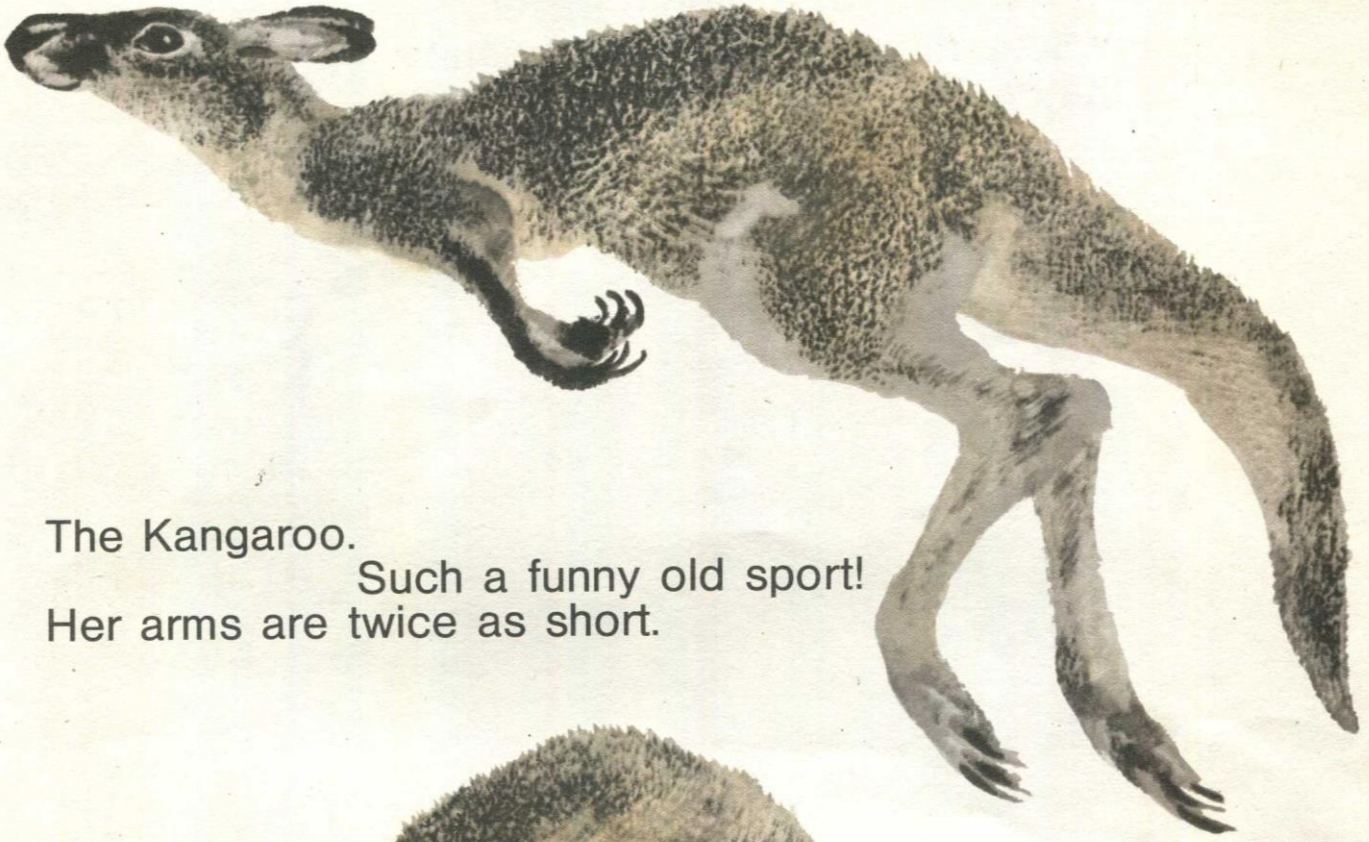
Way, make way, an elephant
Needs room to wag his head!
A page is really much too cramped:
Give 'em a two-page spread!

Crocodile! The children's dread!
Better not to tease him
He's skulking on the river-bed,
So no one ever sees him.

Here's a camel. On the camel
Loads are carried,
people travel.
He lives amongst the desert sands
Eats nasty-tasting bushes, and,



A beast of burden,
strong
and sound,
Is hard at work the whole year round.



The Kangaroo.
Such a funny old sport!
Her arms are twice as short.

But, to make up,
her strong
Back legs are twice as long!

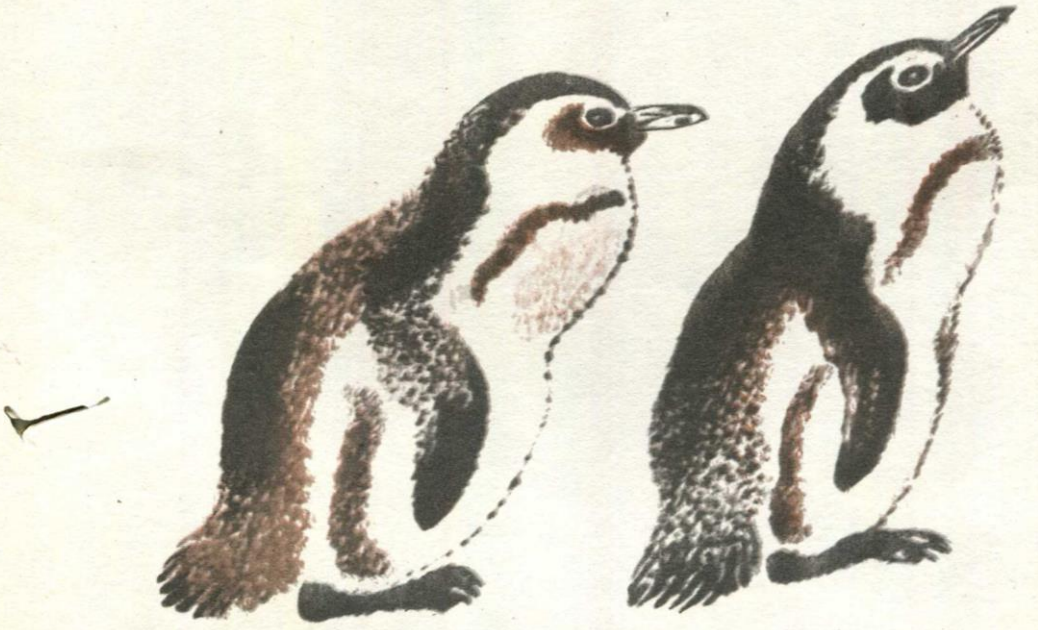
Father Giraffe
has a long neck
–it's
A problem to get him a collar that fits.

His children are lucky:
Mother Giraffe
Has plenty
of neck for
the cuddliest calf.

The monkey.
Funniest of the lot.
Sits like a statue, still as he can!
If not for that tail he's got,
He might be posing as a man!

In wintertime this beast feels blue
The poor beast's from the tropic zone.

But, now I've seen the lot of you.
Good bye, nice beasts–time I went home!



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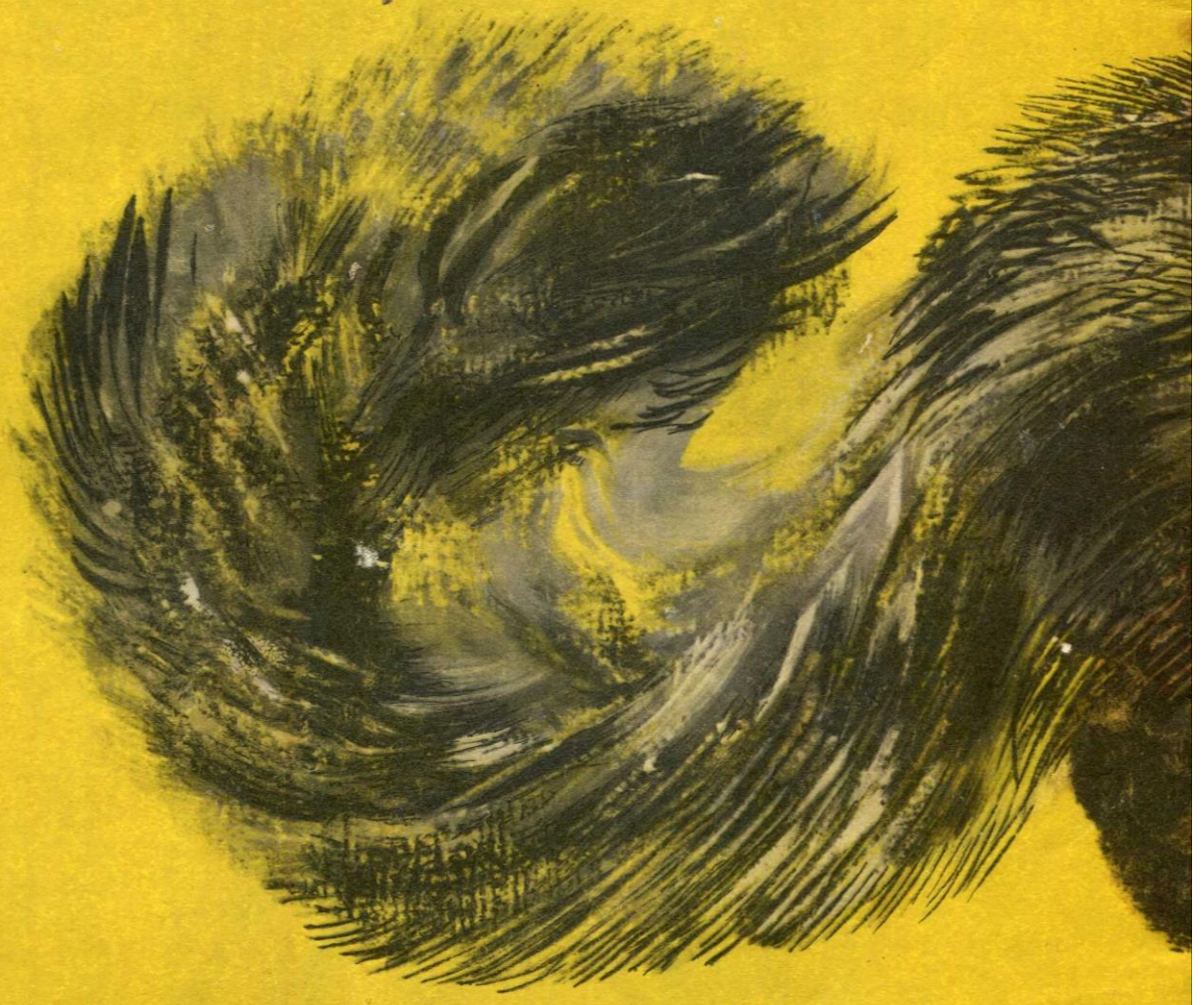
В. Маяковский
Что ни страница,— то слон, то львица

На английском языке



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